**Enrichment Group Activity/Assignment Opportunities.**

**Congratulations on being accepted into the Miracle’s Boys Class Enrichment Group! ☺ Below, please find 21 options for activities and assignments meant to extend your current knowledge and interest in our class novel. Begin by reading each one over carefully and considering which interest you most. I will meet with your group soon to discuss your interests and how to proceed. Depending on the assignment you choose, you may be able to work on this together OR individually.**

1. Research all-boys detention homes in Ohio and New York today. Where might Charlie have been sent to today and what might his experience be like there? Create a poster centered around the slogan “Don’t let this be YOU!” Add images and statistics/facts to teach viewers about your research.
2. Research M.I.T. and qualifications for acceptance. How many/few of people really DO get accepted into this school? (How competitive is it?) Research to see if any (and who) well-known people graduated from M.I.T. and note their accomplishments. (Optional: Look into how *DO* you build a rocket in the park?) Plan to share your findings with the class verbally (in a brief presentation) or visually (bulletin board, poster, webpage) OR write a 1-page essay compiling this information and your reflection on how it relates to Ty’ree: Do you really think he would’ve/could’ve been successful?
3. Select background music that might be appropriate to some of the scenes. Look for **jazz, reggae, hip-hop, or rap**. Create a CD that contains at least 4 songs. If you’re unable to download the music and burn a CD, then print out the lyrics. Include a brief explanation for why you chose each song. Each song should be edited, if necessary, to remain “school-appropriate”. You may choose at least 4 from these options:
   1. 1 song to represent Charlie while he was in Rahway
   2. 1 song to represent Lafayette during or right after Mama died (when he found her body or at the funeral)
   3. 1 song to represent Ty’ree during or after Daddy died (while at Central Park or after Daddy actually died)
   4. 1 song to represent the whole family while Moma and Daddy were alive (even though Lafayette was still just in Mama’s womb at that time.)
   5. 1 song to represent the dangers, peer pressure and dangerous lifestyle on the streets of Harlem, NY. (i.e.: The Fordhams)
   6. 1 song to represent the climax when Charlie gets arrested (Chapter 13-14)
   7. 1 song to represent the resolution of the story: “b to b to b”.
4. Make a bulletin board about the story. Find pictures of a neighborhood like where Laf and his brothers live; show the apartment, the stoop, the police station, the candy store where Charlie is arrested; include pictures of the boys and their friends, and photographs Charlie burned and the ones Laf saved. Include symbolic pictures as well—such as the snake slipping out of its skin and/or an oak tree, etc.
5. Make a bullet board reflecting the THEMES of the story: family; guilt; love; problem-solving; responsibility; courage; and forgiveness. Include images, words, and brief captions explaining the theme, how it’s seen in the book and how you’ve chosen to portray it.
6. Read works by other **African American writers** such as **Toni Morrison, Langston Hughes, or Maya Angelou**. Choose at least one poem written by each of these three authors, or three poems written by one of them. Write a 1-page essay discussing your response to: How do these writers capture the unique experience of being African American?
7. Ty’ree describes a picture in a gallery that looks like their block. Find pictures of **painter Jacob Lawrence**. Print the picture and on a separate page, write 2 paragraphs discussing your response to: How does this artist capture the African American experience? How does he capture universal struggle? (You may use the computer to do additional light research on what kind of struggles African Americans endured in the past.)
8. Write an original rap song that Charlie might sing, possibly about what happened to him at Rahway. You may use the beat/track of another rap song and just change the words. Tape yourself performing it (and/or make a music video too, if you’d like!) and type-up the lyrics to turn-in.
9. As they sit on the stoop, Ty’ree mentions he saw a picture in a gallery that looked the way they must look. Have students study the works of **Edward Hopper**. Find and print the picture by Edward Hopper and and on a separate page, write a 1-page essay discussing your response to: How does this artist capture the everyday life of people?
10. Charlie once cared about stray animals. Learn more about stray animals. Visit an animal shelter and talk to the people there or even volunteer at one. What can be done to prevent so many animals from being strays and not having homes? Suggestion- launch a campaign to educate people about having their pets spayed or neutered.
11. When Laf tells Charlie he wishes he were Chinese so he’d be good at karate, Charlie points out that that is a stereotype. Investigate other racial and ethnic stereotypes. How do they come about? How can we avoid them?
12. Study Puerto Ricans in New York. What led so many to this country? According to the most recent census, how many New Yorkers identify themselves as being Puerto Rican?
13. Research gangs. Why do kids form and join gangs? What are some of the things gangs do? How can we keep young people from joining gangs? Visit these sites for additional information: “Gangs in New York City”: <http://images.nymag.com/news/articles/10/09/nymag101004_crime_map.pdf> and <http://nymag.com/news/features/establishments/68516/>
14. Laf is haunted by dreams. Investigate why we dream and the meanings of our dreams. Put together a visual poster teaching others more about it.
15. When he comes back from Rahway, Charlie develops an interest in caring for plants, especially ferns and Laf hears him talking to them. Find out how to care for a plant. What has research found about talking to plants?
16. Research Current Family Statistics -- How many teens today are raising their siblings? Study statistics about their living conditions and where in the country most of them are living. Is Ty’ree’s sacrifice “normal”? Is Charlie’s anger outbreak “normal”? (Suggestion: also research with the term “kinship care in the US”. Also recommended: <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1101010514-108827,00.html>) Write a 1-page essay discussing your research study and findings AND/OR Create a mini-bulletin board teaching others about this, centered around the question “Did You Know?”
17. Because he’s good at science, Ty’ree had hoped to someday work at NASA. Study & learn more about NASA and space exploration. Put together a visual poster teaching others more about it.
18. The boys’ father dies of hypothermia from saving the dog in the cold lake. Learn more about how this can happen and what might have been done to prevent his death. Additionally, research diabetes and why (how) it killed their mother. When the paramedics come after Laf calls 911, he sees them put something on his mother’s chest that sends electricity to her heart. Conduct some light research to learn more about this procedure and its success rates.
19. What could become of Charlie? Compile your theory and “Did You Know” facts after visiting sites listed below and display them on a poster or bulletin board. Consider: What factors contribute to being a juvenile delinquent? How does this “real-life” data connect to Charlie? (Does it?)
    1. Research 8 Famous People who were juvenile delinquents: <http://www.criminaljusticedegreesguide.com/features/8-famous-people-who-were-juvenile-delinquents.html>
    2. <http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/08/boys/factsheets/jd/report.pdf>
    3. <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/documents/ch07.pdf> (in the U.N?)
    4. <http://samples.jbpub.com/9780763762513/62513_CH03_Elrod3E.pdf> (difficult text for younger readers)

1. Choose another book title also written by Jacqueline Woodson. Read it and conduct some light research to understand how the book reflects the author and/or her life. Note similarities between it and Miracle’s Boys too. Write a 5-paragraph essay explaining how (and what) the book reveals about our author. OR prepare a 10-minute interactive presetnaton utilizing some form of technology (PowerPoint, Prezzi, etc.) Learn more about your author by visiting multiple .ORG or .EDU websites such as: <http://www.ala.org/emiert/sites/ala.org.emiert/files/content/cskbookawards/docs/booklinks-200805-JW.pdf> (Stay away from .COM if possible)
2. *Last Summer with Maizon*
3. *Between Madison and Palmetto*
4. *Maizon at Blue Hill*
5. Choose a title from those listed below. Read it and compare/contrast its themes, characters and plot to Miracle’s Boys. Write a 5-paragraph essay noting its similarities and differences OR prepare a 10-minute interactive presetnaton utilizing some form of technology (PowerPoint, Prezzi, etc.)
6. ***Dancer*** by Lorri Hewett  
   Stephanie works hard to pursue her dream of becoming a professional ballerina while coping with the pressures of her family expectations and those at her mostly white private school.
7. ***Lives of Our Own*** by Lorri Hewett  
   African-American Shawna and white schoolmate Kari defy the unspoken social standards of their small town as they work together to reveal a hidden community secret.
8. ***Money Hungry*** by Sharon Flake  
   A period of homelessness and poverty has made Raspberry Hill determined to hoard as much cash as possible.
9. ***Monster*** by Walter Dean Myers  
   Aspiring filmmaker Steve Harmon copes with his arrest for murder by relating his story as if it were a movie script.
10. ***145th Street*** by Walter Dean Myers  
    The highs and lows of one Harlem neighborhood are explored in ten stories.
11. ***Othello: A Novel*** by Julius Lester  
    This novelization of Shakespeare's classic play revisits the story of interracial love and tragedy.
12. ***Tears of a Tiger*** by Sharon Draper  
    Andy Jackson feels responsible for the death of his good friend, Robert, in a drunk driving accident.
13. ***Zack*** by William Bell  
    Zack is the son of an African-American mother and a Jewish father. He experiences racial rejection for the first time when his family moves from Toronto to a small college town, and feels a need to connect with his family history.